Al Stern 3-27-67

POLICE REPORT

DA's Hole Cards Topic of Guesses

By JACK DEMPSEY

The stage was set last week for one of the most dramatic legal battles in the history of the Criminal District Courts in New Orleans.

The celebrated "conspiracy to assassinate a President" case has been docketed in Section "C"—Judge Edward A. Haggerty Jr.'s section of court—and immediately veteran court attaches began adding up a list of "coincidences."

They point out, for example, that Albert V. LaBiche, foreman of the grand jury which indicted Clay L. Shaw this past week, also served as foreman of the grand jury which investigated the famed Diddie Cooper murder case.

JACK DEMPSEY

Judge Haggerty, then an assistant district attorney, coincidentally, served as prosecutor in the Cooper trial.

Judge Haggerty occupies the same courtroom which the late Judge Fred W. Oser presided over for many years. Judge Oser's son, Asst. Dist. Atty. Alvin V. Oser, is one of the leading prosecutors who is scheduled to represent the state in the Shaw case.

Attorney F. Irvin Dymond, one of Shaw's co-counsel, gained prominence in the Ginger Baumann case when he won an acquittal for the comely young woman charged with slaying her husband. The case was fought in the same courtroom—Section "C," then presided over by Judge Oser.

★ ★ ★

THE BIG QUESTION BEING RAISED these days is: "How much more evidence does Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison have than was exposed at the recent three-judge preliminary hearing?"

Many observers were surprised that Perry Russo was the only witness apparently called by the grand jury before it returned an indictment in the case.

Courthouse lawyers point out that the words "and others" in the conspiracy indictment may prove to be most significant in the days to come.

An authoritative source says there will be at least 22 witnesses called by the state when the Shaw case comes to trial. Another reliable source predicts that at least two more persons, as yet unnamed, will be indicted in the alleged conspiracy.

The preliminary hearing attracted newsmen from abroad, and it's a safe bet that the trial will bring the same group back—along with many others.

★ ★ ★

SHAW IS THE FIRST PERSON to be actually brought to trial in connection with the Kennedy assassination, and the spotlight will once again be focused on New Orleans at trial time.

Several public opinion polls indicate that more than 60

per cent of the public believe or want to believe that there were more persons involved than Lee Harvey Oswald in the assassination.

Many believe there was a conspiracy involved, and thus Garrison has a legion of backers and well-wishers on his side.

Close followers, including many "doubting Thomases," are disturbed by the fact that Garrison announced that he had his case "solved" before Russo came onto the scene. But then—is Russo his real "star witness" or does he have several more in reserve?

Look for Criminal Sheriff Louis A. Heyd Jr. to revamp his security setup when the trial date is finally announced. Although his office received plaudits for the manner in which the security of the courtroom and the entire building was effected, Sheriff Heyd plans to make some changes pending the approval of Judge Haggerty.

Foremost among these revisions will be the press clearance. For the hearing, Heyd's office kept file cards on the members of the news media covering the hearing and issued small business-type cards with their names and numbers.

These cards were surrendered by the press members as they filed into court and were retrieved as they left. This caused a bottle-neck at the court entrance and will be junked for the trial.

Heyd plans to issue larger cards containing a small photo of the news representative on the reverse side. These cards will be laminated and will remain in the possession of the newsmen to be used to enter and leave court.

Ptn. Louis Ivon, chief investigator for the district attorney's office, who succeeded ex-FBI agent Ray Beck when the latter resigned several months ago, came through with flying colors at a crucial time in the conduct of the probe.

Ptn. Ivon is calling the shots on the investigation procedures and is being assisted by William Gurvich, an outside investigator hired by Garrison.

With hundreds of leads to be run out and scores of witnesses to be interrogated, the job of ramrodding the investigation calls for a cool head and efficient leadership.

★ ★ ★